

The beginning of the end started five years ago when I worked on a frailty unit at our hospital. I and three trainee nurses, plus a band 6 witnessed a Male HCA try to get a dementia sufferer to stay in bed by tipping his bed, head down by 45 degrees to stop him getting up. He was supposed to be one to one with the gentleman. The gentleman was determined to go for a walk, but instead the HCA literally picked him up and threw him on the bed.

Next incident, again witnessed by lots of staff, involved the same HCA. He had put a mattress up against a fire door and had a gentleman suffering from dementia stood in front of the mattress whilst he was deliberately pushing a walking frame into him. The gent was frightened and shouting for help. I was the only one that stepped in and took the gent away. The HCA cornered me in a staff area to try and intimidate me, nothing was done.

A female patient approached me in tears at the start of my shift to tell me one of the male staff had sexually abused her. She described him and told me his hands were everywhere and he was rough. I immediately reported it to the ward sister. I said nothing to anyone else. Next day I went in and was taken off the ward as this HCA complained I stressed him out too much to work and he had gone off sick.

I ended up being suspended three times and I even went to the police station and sat for three hours giving statements. Eventually, after 12 months I got an apology from the trust and the HCA was given retraining.

I joined a specialist dementia nursing home. The abuses I saw were horrendous. Physical, verbal, wilful neglect, illegal restraint, falsified paperwork, residents would not speak they flinched when anyone went near. I kept a detailed diary, took pics of paperwork, when I believed I had enough evidence I handed it into the large American run company! Stupidly thinking I could improve things. The home was crawling with management the next day and I was assured they themselves had informed the CQC and the council of my diary. I stupidly believed them. Firstly, the staff knew what I had done so made my life a misery, then the company started investigating me and threatened me with losing my DBS check. I had never been given an induction; I was never given a handover.

Residents were knowingly left sat in their own excrement for up to 8 hours, they had urine burns, pads were changed without skin care being carried out. They all had dry, flaky skin, covered in bruises. In five months, I never saw one have a bath. Diets and fluids were missed, and senior staff would alter paperwork to cover. Residents who were at risk of choking were given normal diets; diabetics were given high sugar diets.

I saw one lady being force fed, I saw a male nurse punching residents, he pushed a lady up against a door frame, I intervened and immediately her wrists and arms were bruised purple. I saw staff encouraging residents to fight and argue, balls being deliberately thrown at dementia sufferers, one would wait until they slept and squirt water in their faces. Residents would fall and just be sat back down; many residents were later diagnosed with hip fractures well after the falls.

Residents in their rooms were not checked but the paperwork would be signed. A resident's wife had been with him all day and his carer had signed that she had changed him, washed him, fed him she had not been in his room at all. A resident had a stroke, but two nursing staff refused to come until I told them a visitor was present. They sat her in a wheelchair and just told me to watch her. When I complained a senior manager told me it was pointless taking her to hospital to waste four hours stuck on a trolley. Many more things happened but after five months I walked out.

Then I went to another dementia residential home. I did not see the level of abuse I did at the last, but again any incidents or complaints were ignored. Some staff were vicious verbally and extremely

rough with residents who they said” knew what they were doing”. I walked on a unit and found a charming resident on the floor crying, she said thank god I was there as the carer had “put her there “the carer appeared and told me to leave her on the floor as she put herself there, I didn’t obviously. Agency staff were also being used more and residents started to get pressure sores, fungal infections under breasts, groins, etc. One resident would try and retaliate but would end up covered in bruises.

I used to try and get on her unit to try and protect her. When this lady passed away during Covid I worked another couple of shifts there, one morning I found one poor resident sat alone sobbing, freezing cold and glass smashed everywhere in her room. The night staff knew nothing, even though he signed to say all checks were done, another shift a resident wasn’t allowed two bowls of cornflakes and because they got one lady up late she had to go without, so that was my last shift.

Whilst I worked at the second job, I had a mental breakdown, my doctor had to give me sleeping pills and other tablets and was telling me I had to leave. I felt I could not as the residents would interact with me and I believed in some way I made their existence better, but eventually I had no choice.

I love and miss my job, I know I have always done the right thing for the residents, but it has caused me so many problems, I detest the whole care system, now we have Covid they are all being hailed as hero’s, it will soon revert to business as usual, our elderly and infirm being treated like they’re an inconvenience ,living out their final time in fear, pain and abject misery.

CQC and the Safeguarding system are not fit for purpose. They are afraid to shut down abusive homes as there is literally nowhere else to place residents. The whole system is enabling the abuse to continue, it is a case of out of sight out of mind.